

# **Child Protection Policy Nicker N.S.**

## **1. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

The Board of Management of Nicker N.S. values and encourages the participation of pupils in all activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. The school recognises the dignity and rights of all pupils and is committed to ensuring their protection and support. Management, staff and volunteers accept and recognise our responsibilities both to develop awareness of the practices which cause children harm and to create an environment that safeguards the well-being of all the children that attend the school. This policy applies to all school employees.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2011 attached at Appendix 1 are incorporated without modification into this Child Protection Policy. In the event of a conflict between Appendix 1 and this Policy, Appendix 1 will prevail.

The Board of Management also agrees to the implementation of the Stay Safe Programme.  
The Child Protection Policy of Nicker N.S. has been developed in accordance with:

- The requirements of the Department of Education & Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, 2011.
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 ("Children First Guidelines").
- Department of Education & Skills Circular 0065/2011.

Queries about Child Protection Procedures in our school should be directed to the Fr. Burns, Chairperson, Nicker N.S., Pallasgrean

Allegations or suspicions of child abuse should be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or, where necessary, to the Chairperson of the Board of Management or the relevant authorities.

### **Child Protection Contacts**

Designated Liaison Person Karen Franklin

Deputy Liaison Person Siobhán English

Garda Station Telephone: (061)382947 (Bruff)

Tusla 061 588688

Children and Family Social Services of the HSE:

**Social Work Department (Limerick East)** - Unit 3 St. Camillus Hospital Limerick Tel: (061) 483 711

Cappamore Health centre: 061) 381 371

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Child Abuse: Towards a Definition

Nicker N.S. has adopted the definition of child abuse as described in the 'Children First Guidelines'.

The 'Children First Guidelines', defines child abuse by using 4 categories: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. It should be noted that a child may be subject to more than one form of abuse at any given time.

#### **Neglect**

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, medical care or attachment to and affection from adults.

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For example, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having his or her needs met in terms of necessary supervision and safety. A child whose height or weight is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation.

The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that their well-being and/or development are severely affected.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is normally found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms. Examples may include:-

- the imposition of negative attributes on a child, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions;
- emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer;
- unresponsiveness of the parent/carer and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child;
- premature imposition of responsibility on the child;
- unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself or herself in a certain way;
- under- or over-protection of the child;

- failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development;
- use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures;
- exposure to domestic violence;
- exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through new technology.

Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement and oppositional behaviour.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidences. Physical abuse can involve:

- severe physical punishment,
- beating, slapping, hitting or kicking,
- pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling,
- terrorizing with threats,
- observing violence,
- use of excessive force in handling,
- deliberate poisoning,
- suffocation,
- fabricated/induced illness, or
- allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for their gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. Examples of sexual abuse include:

- exposing sexual organs or intentionally performing any sexual act in the presence of a child,
- intentional touching or molesting the body of a child, by a person or object, for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification,
- masturbating in the presence of a child or involving the child in the act of masturbation,
- engaging in sexual intercourse with the child, whether oral, vaginal or anal,
- sexually exploiting a child which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requesting or permitting a child to solicit for or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modeling or posing for the purpose of sexual manipulation, for these purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children which is often a feature of the grooming process of perpetrators of abuse, or
- consensual sexual activity between an adult and a child under the age of consent.

(In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years).

### **Aggressive/Bullying/Sexualised Behaviour:**

While bullying is not a category in itself, it is important to be aware of it in relation to child abuse. Bullying can be defined as repeated verbal, psychological or physical aggression that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It includes behaviour such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more persons against a victim. Bullying can also take the form of racial abuse. Children may also be subject to non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices.

- In Nicker N.S., peer to peer bullying as described above will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour that is perpetrated by an adult against a child will be dealt with under the provisions of this policy.

Sexualised behaviour displayed by an individual child, or occurring between children is inappropriate. Should such behaviour occur the school:

- Will arrange meetings (separate meetings if there are children from more than one family implicated) with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child/children involved.
- May if deemed appropriate seek advice from and/or make a report to TUSLA.

In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the child protection procedures will be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser; that is, the matter will be considered a child care and protection issue for both children.

### **Responsibility to Report Suspected or Actual Abuse**

Any person who suspects that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility and a duty of care to report their concerns to TUSLA or an Garda Síochána, either directly or through the Designated Liaison Person.

*The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998* provides immunity from civil liability to people who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to TUSLA or the Gardaí.

Members of Boards of Management and school personnel furnishing information with regard to suspicions of child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to the DLP or Chairperson of the Board of Management are protected under '*Qualified Privilege*' as defined by Common Law.

It is a criminal offence to make a report of child abuse 'knowing the statement to be false'.

### **2.3 The Health Service Executive**

TUSLA has a range of statutory responsibilities in the area of child welfare, family support, child protection and child care.

Once an allegation of child abuse has been reported to TUSLA, it is then a matter for TUSLA to decide upon the action, if any, which is necessitated by that report.

In the case of allegations or suspicions of child abuse by school employees the *Children First* Guidelines place an onus on TUSLA to ensure that arrangements are put in place to provide feedback to the Board of Management in regard to the progress of a child abuse investigation regarding an employee. It is clearly stated in those guidelines that efforts should be made to investigate complaints against employees promptly bearing in mind the serious implications for an innocent employee. TUSLA is required to pass on reports and records to the Board of Management and the employee in question where appropriate. The Board of Management should always be notified of the outcome of investigations. It is the responsibility of the Chairperson of the Board of Management to maintain close contact with TUSLA to ensure that TUSLA acts promptly in cases of alleged abuse involving school employees.

### 3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 3.1 The Board of Management

The Board of Management of Nicker NS. acknowledges its responsibilities in respect of child protection to include the following:

- Primary responsibility for the care and welfare of pupils.
- The development and implementation of an effective child protection policy.
- The review and evaluation of the child protection policy and associated procedures.
- The appointment of a DLP and deputy DLP.
- The provision of appropriate staff development and training.
- To monitor the progress of children at risk.
- The investigation of allegations of child abuse against one of the school's employees.
- To ensure that curriculum provision aimed at the prevention of child abuse is in place.
- The development of a policy on teachers' attendance at child protection meetings/case conferences and the provision of advice to teachers before attending such meetings/conferences.

#### 3.2 School Staff & Volunteers

- All staff have a general duty of care to ensure that arrangements are in place to protect children from harm.
- Staff are responsible for adhering to the child protection procedures as detailed in the school's child protection policy and for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of such a programme.
- Teaching staff are responsible for the delivery of the curriculum aimed at the prevention of child abuse.

The planning and implementation of appropriate staff development and training programmes.

- All school personnel are especially well placed to observe changes in behaviour, failure to develop or outward signs of abuse in children. In situations where school staff or volunteers suspect abuse or have concerns regarding the welfare of a child they are required to act in accordance with the procedures detailed in this document.

### 3.3 Role of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

- The DLP has specific responsibility for child protection.
- The DLP is the first point of contact within the school regarding suspicions or disclosures of abuse.
- This person is the Designated Liaison Person for the school in all dealings with TUSLA, An Garda Síochána and other parties, in connection with allegations of abuse.
- In instances where there are reasonable grounds for a suspicion or allegation of child abuse the DLP is responsible for reporting the matter to TUSLA, or in the case of an emergency the Garda Síochána.
- The DLP is responsible for informing the Chairperson of the Board of Management if a report involving a pupil in the school has been submitted to TUSLA or An Garda Síochána.
- The DLP of Nicker N.S is Ms. Karen Franklin, Principal

### 3.4 Role of the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP)

- The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is responsible for performing the DLP's responsibilities if she is unavailable or in her absence.
- The DDLDP of Nicker N.S. is Ms.Siobhán English, Deputy Principal.

## 4. CHILD PROTECTION: CREATING A SAFE & SECURE ENVIRONMENT

### 4.1 Code of Good Practice for BoM members, Staff & Volunteers

*For the purposes of the Code of Good Practice the term personnel describes anyone who engages with pupils of the school during the school day (including school activities organised outside of school hours or off the school premises), whether as a paid employee or as a volunteer.*

Personnel are required to comply with Chapter 3 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools which outlines their responsibilities.

In its policies, practices and activities Nicker N.S. will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school will:

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters;
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters
- provide guidance on internet safety for parents, pupils and staff

- ensure adequate supervision of children’s internet use in school, as outlined in the Internet Policy and the Acceptable Use policy.
- advise parents that children’s internet usage during remote learning should be supervised.

### **General Conduct**

- Physical punishment of pupils is not permissible under any circumstances.
- Verbal abuse of pupils, the use of sexual innuendo or telling jokes of a sexual nature in the presence of pupils is never acceptable. Great care should be taken if it is necessary to have a conversation regarding sexual matters with a pupil.
- Being alone with a pupil is not good practice. School personnel should only be alone with a pupil if exceptional and/or emergency circumstances arise which makes it necessary be alone with a pupil.
- If such circumstances do arise and it is necessary for personnel to be alone with a pupil, the staff member should do the following:- (i) inform the DLP as soon as possible; (ii) make a note of the meeting and the reasons for it;(iii) inform the pupil’s parents/guardian unless to do so would put the child at further risk. Procedures for one-to –one teaching are outlined in Section 4.5
- All pupils are treated with equal respect; favouritism is not acceptable.
- Personnel should not engage in or tolerate any behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical – that could be construed as bullying or abusive.
- A disproportionate amount of time should not be spent with any particular pupil or group of pupils.
- Under no circumstances should school personnel give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to pupils.

### **Respect for Physical Integrity**

- The physical integrity of pupils must be respected at all times.
- Personnel must not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind – including tough physical play, physical reprimand and horseplay (tickling, wrestling). This should not prevent appropriate contact in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of a pupil (for example, where a pupil is distressed).

### **Respect for Privacy**

- The right to privacy of pupils must be respected at all times.
- Particular care regarding privacy must be taken when pupils are in locations such as changing areas, swimming pools, showers and toilets. Personnel should not be alone with pupils in such areas as swimming pools, showers and toilets.
- Photographs of pupils must never be taken while they are in changing areas (for example, in a locker room or bathing facility) or toilets.
- Tasks of a personal nature (for example, helping with toileting, washing or changing clothing) should not be done for pupils if they can undertake these tasks themselves.

### **Meetings with Pupils**

- If it is necessary to meet alone with a pupil, such meetings should not be held in an isolated environment. The times and designated locations for meetings should allow for transparency and

accountability (for example, be held in rooms with a clear glass panel or window, in buildings where other people are present, and with the door of the room left open).

- Both the length and number of meetings should be limited.
- Parents or guardians should be informed that the meeting(s) took place, except in circumstances where to do so might place the pupil in danger.
- When the need for a visit to the home of a pupil or young person arises, professional boundaries must be observed at all times. No such meeting should take place without the pupil's parent/guardian being present, unless the presence of the parent/guardian would place the pupil at risk.

### **Pupils with Special Needs or Disability**

- Pupils with special needs or disability may depend on adults more than other pupils for their care and safety, and so sensitivity and clear communication are particularly important
- Where it is necessary to carry out tasks of a personal nature for a pupil with special needs, this should be done with the full understanding and consent of parents or guardians.
- In carrying out such personal care tasks, sensitivity must be shown to the pupil and the tasks should be undertaken with the utmost discretion.
- Any care task of a personal nature which a pupil or young person can do for themselves should not be undertaken by personnel.
- In an emergency situation where this type of help is required, parents should be fully informed as soon as is reasonably possible.

### **Vulnerable Pupils**

- As especially vulnerable pupils may depend on adults more than other children for their care and safety, sensitivity and clear communication are of utmost importance.
- Workers should be aware that vulnerable pupils may be more likely than other pupils to be bullied or subjected to other forms of abuse, and may also be less clear about physical and emotional boundaries.
- It is particularly important that vulnerable pupils should be carefully listened to, in recognition of the fact that they may have difficulty in expressing their concerns and in order that the importance of what they say is not underestimated.

### **Handling Disclosures from Pupils**

Personnel dealing with disclosures from pupils should act with tact and sensitivity. In particular personnel who find themselves in such a situation should:

- Listen to the pupil
- Not ask leading questions or make suggestions to the pupil
- Offer reassurance but not make promises (e.g. promising not to tell anyone else)
- Not stop a pupil recalling significant events
- Not over react
- Explain that further help will have to be sought
- Make an accurate record the conversation and retain the record
- Report the matter to the DLP (or to the Chairperson of the BoM if the DLP is implicated)



## **Maintaining Records**

When child abuse is suspected, it is essential to have a record of all the information available.

Personnel should note carefully what they have observed and when they observed it. Signs of physical injury should be described in detail and, if appropriate, sketched. Any comment by the child concerned, or by any other person, about how an injury occurred should be recorded, preferably quoting words actually used, as soon as possible after the comment has been made.

All records so created should be regarded as highly confidential and retained in a secure location by the DLP.

## **4.2 Vetting of New Employees**

The Board of Management undertakes that it will comply with legal requirements and directions from the Department of Education and Skills in relation to Garda Vetting of new employees and, in particular:-

- A Garda Vetting Letter/Report is requested in respect of all new appointees (permanent, fixed term and substitute).
- Reference checks will be carried out in respect of all new appointees.

## **4.3 Induction of New Employees**

- All new employees will be given a copy of this policy.
- The DLP will be responsible for:
  - providing all new teachers and ancillary staff with copies of
    - (i) the Department of Education & Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, 2011;
    - (ii) Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011;
    - (iii) this policy document and discussing their obligations with regard to same.
- All new teachers are expected to teach the designated SPHE objectives for their class.

## **4.4 Supervision**

Every effort will be made to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of pupils throughout the school day. A roster of staff on duty will be displayed in the office/staff room. Teachers will ensure that pupils are visible in the schoolyard. Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school yard or engage with adults outside of the schoolyard.

## **4.5 One-to-One Teaching**

- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be made aware when one-to-one teaching is deemed to be in the best interest of a pupil. Written consent will be required for all one-to-one teaching. One –to – one teaching will be undertaken in a room which has a door with a glass panel, or with the door left open so that teacher and pupil are not hidden from view.

## **4.6 Attendance**

Procedures with regard to the monitoring of school attendance are contained in the school's Code of Behaviour.

#### **4.7 Curriculum**

In addition to the implied messages of kindness, respect and care which permeate the children's everyday learning environment, the school's religious education programme, RSE programme and the lessons on SPHE in textbooks at all class levels, the following programmes are used in the school;

Stay Safe

Walk Tall

Friends for Life

Programmes recommended by School Psychologist

#### **4.8 Use of Images of Children**

- The school undertakes to seek parents' or guardians' permission for the use of photographs of pupils for any purposes.
- At school ceremonies and other public events, the school will publicly announce the use of photographic and audio visual equipment by the school so that anyone who would rather not be photographed or videoed can remove themselves.
- Only images of pupils in appropriate dress will be used.
- Inappropriate use of images of pupils will be brought to the attention of the DLP.
- No images of any pupil may be taken by an external agency or person without receiving the prior authorisation of the school principal.

#### **4.9 Use of Technology**

- Procedures with regard to the use of technology are contained in the school's Acceptable Usage Policy and Internet Safety Policy. It is the school's intention that no member of the school community should be exposed to cyber bullying .
- Procedures with regard to the use of mobile phones, as detailed in the school's policy on mobile phones).

#### **4.10 School Visitors**

Procedures with regard to school visitors are contained in the School Visitors Policy.

#### **4.11 Travel**

Best practice in relation to travel with pupils will be observed. Personnel will not undertake any car or minibus journey alone with a pupil. If, in certain circumstances, only one adult is available, there should be a minimum of two pupils present for the entire journey. In the event of an emergency, where it is necessary to make a journey alone with a pupil, (i) the DLP will be informed; (ii) a record will be made and (iii) the pupil's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be informed as soon as is possible.

#### **4.12 School Tours / Overnight Trips**

- All trips, including day trips and overnight stays, will be carefully planned in advance, to include adequate provision for safety in regard to transport, facilities, activities and emergencies. Adequate insurance will be put in place.

- Written consent by a parent or guardian specifically for each trip and related activities will be obtained in advance.
- A copy of the itinerary and contact telephone numbers will be made available to parents and guardians.
- There will be adequate, gender appropriate supervision for boys and girls.
- Arrangements and procedures will be put in place to ensure that rules and appropriate boundaries are maintained in the relaxed environment of trips away.
- Particular attention will be given to ensuring that the privacy of young people is respected when they are away on trips.
- The provision of appropriate and adequate sleeping arrangements will be ensured in advance of the trip.
- Sleeping areas for boys and girls will be separate and supervised by two adults of the same sex as the group being supervised.
- At least two adults will be present in dormitories in which children are sleeping. Under no circumstances will an adult share a bedroom with a young person.
- If, in an emergency situation, an adult considers it necessary to be in a child's dormitory or bedroom without another adult being present they will (a) immediately inform the DLP; (b) make a diary note of the circumstances; and (iii) inform the pupil's parent/guardian.

## 6. REPORTING CASES OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

### 6.1 Action to be Taken by School Personnel

If a school employee receives an allegation or has a suspicion that a pupil is being abused the school employee should follow the procedures set out in Chapter 4 of the "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools" which is attached at Appendix 1.

A list of indicators of child abuse is outlined in Appendix 3 of Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools and school personnel should consult with these procedures and liaise with the DLP where they have concerns that a child may have been abused or neglected or is being abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse or neglect.

## 7. CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

A child protection conference is a forum for the co-ordination of information from all relevant sources, including where necessary, school employees. The child protection conference plays a pivotal role in making recommendations and planning for the welfare of children who may be at serious risk. The procedures in relation to child protection conferences are set out in Chapter 4.5 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools and these procedures should be followed by all school personnel.

## 8. ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE BY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

The primary concern of the Board of Management of Nicker N.S. is to protect the pupils attending the school to whom we have a duty of care. However, as an employer, the Board of Management also has responsibilities towards its employees. In this respect, and in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against an employee of the school the Board of Management will observe the employees' right not to be judged in advance of a full and fair enquiry.

Should an allegation of abuse be made against a school employee/ a member of the Board of Management, the Board of Management undertakes to seek legal advice in respect of same.

In circumstances where such an allegation is made, the school will comply with the procedures contained in Chapter 5 of Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools. All school personnel will be required to comply with these procedures.

## 9. CONFIDENTIALITY

- All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse will be treated confidentially and will only be shared on a need to know basis in the interests of the child.
- Giving information to those who need to have that information or as required by law, for the protection of a child who may have been, or has been abused, is not a breach of confidentiality.
- Any DLP who is submitting a report to TUSLA or An Garda Síochána will inform a parent/guardian unless doing so is likely to endanger the child or place the child at further risk. A decision not to inform a parent/guardian will be recorded together with the reasons for not doing so.
- The Board of Management and staff of Nicker N.S. gives an undertaking to deal with all child protection issues with the utmost confidentiality.

## 10. RELATED POLICIES

- Code of Behaviour
- School Visitors Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy

## 11. POLICY RATIFICATION

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Nicker N.S. at its meeting held on

Date \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson, Board of Management

### Appendix 1: Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of its Child Protection Policy and the following checklist shall be used for this purpose.

The checklist is designed as an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. The BoM may wish to include other items in the checklist that are of particular relevance to [Insert School Name] and reserves the right to do so if/when the need occurs.

1.	As part of the overall review process, Boards of Management should also assess other school policies, practices and activities vis a vis their adherence to the principles of best practice in child protection and welfare as set out in the school's Child Protection policy	YES	NO
2.	Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy in accordance with the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	YES	NO
3.	As part of the school's child protection policy, has the Board formally adopted, without modification, the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	YES	NO
4.	Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?	YES	NO
5.	Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Síochána) to hand?	YES	NO
6.	Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	YES	NO
7.	Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	YES	NO
8.	Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?	YES	NO
9.	Has the school's child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance?	YES	NO
10.	Has the Board ensured that the Department's 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' are available to all school personnel?	YES	NO
11.	Does the Board have arrangements in place to communicate the school's child protection policy to new school personnel?	YES	NO
12.	Is the Board satisfied that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	YES	NO
13.	Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any child protection reports made to the HSE/An Garda Síochána by the DLP?	YES	NO
14.	Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report to the HSE was made?	YES	NO
15.	Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to the HSE/ An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed?	YES	NO

16.	Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?	YES	NO
17.	Is the Board satisfied that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	YES	NO
18.	Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association has been provided with the school's child protection policy?	YES	NO

## Ratification of Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: June 2021

The Board further endorses the Principal, Karen Franklin as the school DLP and Siobhan English as Deputy DLP.

On behalf of the Board of Management:

\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2

### Child Protection Practices

#### Internet Safety

In conjunction with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Statement and Acceptable Use Policy, this policy aims to put in place robust measures to combat cyber bullying against any member of the school community.

Child protection concerns will be addressed in the school's Acceptable Use Policy and Internet Safety Policy. The Stay Safe lessons in each classroom may be supplemented with appropriate resources. There will also be annual meetings during which parents will be invited to attend a session with an invited speaker to stay abreast of the ever-changing situation regarding internet access.

All media products (CDs, DVDs etc.) are checked for their appropriateness with regard to age and suitability.

#### Visitors/Guest Speakers

Appropriately appointed and screened visiting teachers of varying disciplines, engaged by the BoM of Nicker NS to perform specific duties, will be left work with a class alone at the Principal's discretion

Visitors/Guest speakers are never be left alone with pupils. All guidelines in relation to Garda Vetting will be adhered to. The school has a responsibility to check out the credentials of the visitor/guest speaker and to ensure that the material in use is appropriate.

It is expected that all school business will be conducted in a non-aggressive co-operative manner. At no stage will loud, aggressive interactions be allowed to continue. The Principal and staff have the co-operation of the Board of Management in requesting that any adult, parent, or visitor to the school who is not abiding by same, be asked to leave the premises immediately.

If the aggressive behavior persists, in the interests of health and safety, the Principal has authority from the Board of Management to make contact with the Gardaí immediately who will deal with the matter.

#### Children with specific toileting/intimate care needs

- In all situations where a pupil needs assistance with toileting/intimate care, a meeting will be convened, after enrolment and before the child starts school, between parents/guardians, class teacher, special needs assistant, Principal and if appropriate the pupil. The purpose of the meeting will be to ascertain the specific needs of the child and to determine how the school can best meet those needs
- The staff to be involved in this, care will be identified and provision will be made for occasions when the particular staff involved are absent. A written copy of what has been agreed will be made and kept in the child's file.
- Two members of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care/toileting needs. Any deviation from the agreed procedure will be recorded and notified to the DLP and the parents/guardians.



### **Toileting accidents**

Clean underwear and suitable clothing will be kept in the school so that if a pupil has an 'accident' of this nature, they will in the first instance be offered fresh clothing into which they can change.

If the pupil for whatever reason cannot clean or change themselves and the parents/guardians cannot be contacted, the child will be assisted by members of staff familiar to the child. In all such situations, two members of staff should be present. A record of all such incidents will be kept and Principal and parents will be notified.

### **Accidents**

While every precaution will be taken under our Health and Safety Statement to ensure the safety of children, we realise that accidents will happen. Accidents will be noted in our Incident book and will be addressed under our Accident Policy as part of Health and Safety.

### **Changing for games/PE/Swimming**

Pupils will be expected to dress and undress themselves for Games/PE/Swimming. Where assistance is needed, this will be done in the communal area and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff/volunteers be expected to or allowed to dress/undress a child unsupervised in a cubicle/private area. In such situations where privacy is required, the parents/guardians of the child will be asked to assist the child. Nicker NS will endeavour to have male volunteers/member of staff in the male changing area and female members of staff/ volunteers in the female changing area.

When this is not possible two female volunteers/staff members will assist if required, ensuring that the children's privacy is respected.

The BoM of Nicker NS has requested that all swimming volunteers apply to be vetted. In the interim, a Volunteer Form approved by the CPSMA will be in use. At all times there must be adequate supervision of pupils. While every effort will be made to adhere to best practice as agreed and outlined above, in the event of an emergency where this is not possible or practicable, a full record of the incident should be made and reported to the Principal and parents.

### **Attendance**

Our school attendance will be monitored as per our attendance policy. With regards to child protection, we will pay particular attention to trends in non-attendance. We will also monitor non-attendance in correlation with signs of neglect/physical/emotional abuse.

### **Behaviour**

Children are encouraged at all times to play co-operatively and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed under our Code of Behaviour. If an incident occurs which we consider to be of a sexualised nature, we will notify the DLP who will record it and respond to it appropriately.

### **Bullying**

Bullying behaviour will be addressed under our Anti-Bullying policy. If the behaviour involved is of a sexualised nature or regarded as being particularly abusive, then the matter will be referred to the DLP.

### **Children travelling in staff cars**

Members of the school staff will not carry children alone in their cars at any time. Only in exceptional circumstances will children travel in staff cars.

## **Communication**

Every effort will be made to enhance pupil-teacher communication. If pupils have concerns they will be listened to sympathetically. The SPHE/Oral Language/RE programmes allow for open pupil-teacher communication, which is hoped will aid the pupil-teacher relationship. If teachers have to communicate with pupils on a one-to-one basis, they are requested to leave the classroom door open or request a colleague to attend.

## **Induction of Staff**

The DLP will be responsible for informing all new teachers and ancillary staff of the Child Protection Procedures (DES, 2011) and Children First Guidelines (2011), but particularly the recently published Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011). All new teachers are expected to teach the appropriate SPHE objectives for their class. A member of staff, once trained, will be responsible for the mentoring of new teachers and will be responsible for supporting new teachers as they implement the SPHE objectives.

## **Induction of Pupils**

All parents and children will be made aware of attendance rules and their implications as laid down in the Education Welfare Act (2000). All parents will be informed of the programmes in place in the school that deal with personal development e.g. RSE, Walk Tall, Stay Safe and SPHE. All new parents will be given a copy of the school's enrolment policy, which outlines the procedures parents and children should use when contacting the school if there are absences or concerns of an educational/personal/family matter. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the class teacher/principal if they wish to discuss their child's progress. All parents will be given a copy of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

## **Record Keeping**

Teachers will keep records on each child's reports using Nicker NS Record Keeping Sheets. These records are kept in the drawer of each teacher's desk. Roll books will be updated daily. Sensitive information regarding children will be shared on a need-to-know basis. All educational files of pupils who no longer attend this school are kept in the filing cabinet in the office. Further details on record keeping will be found in the school's Record Keeping Policy.

## **Supervision**

The school's supervision policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that there is comprehensive supervision of children at all breaks. A rota will be displayed to cover 11 o'clock and lunchtime breaks. See Supervision Policy for agreed rules around break-times and procedures around teacher absences.

## **Visibility**

Teachers will ensure that children are visible in the school playground. Children will not be allowed to spend time in classrooms, toilets or sheds where they would not be under adult supervision. They are not to leave the school playground or to engage with adults who are outside of the school playground.

## Appendix 4

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In recent years, as a society, we have become very aware of the problem of child abuse through neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Each one of us has a duty to protect children and Children First, the National Guidelines, for the Protection and Welfare of Children noted that teachers, who are the main care givers to children outside the family, are particularly well placed to observe and monitor children for signs of abuse.

In response to this, the Department of Education and Skills published procedures for all schools in relation to child protection and welfare. These guidelines promote the safety and welfare of all children and are to be welcomed.

The Board of Management of Nicker NS has adopted these guidelines as school policy. Consequently, if school staff suspect or are alerted to possible child abuse, they are obliged to refer this matter to the Health Service Executive (HSE). The HSE will then assess the situation and provide support for the child concerned.

Children First, the National Guidelines for the Protection of Children may be assessed on the website of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.([www.dcyu.ie](http://www.dcyu.ie)) and the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures can be read on the Department's website ([www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)). Parents/Guardians are also welcome to look through the guidelines here at the school.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

**Child Protection Contacts**

**Designated Liaison Person**

**Karen Franklin**

**Deputy DLP**

**Siobhán English**

**Garda Station**

**Telephone: 382947 (Bruff)**

**Local Contact For**

**‘The Children and Family Social Services of the HSE’**

**TELEPHONE: 061) 457102 (Ballynanty)**

**061) 483091 (Clare St.)**

**Cappamore Health centre:**

**061) 381 371**

**Address:**

**Cappamore,**

**Co. Limerick**